

Utilization of Digital Health Tools for Comprehensive Primary Healthcare: A Situational Analysis of Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, India

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Abstract:

A key pillar of Ayushman Bharat is to roll out Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) by establishing Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) in the country. In Feb 2018, Government of India announced creation of 150,000 HWCs by transforming existing sub-centers (SCs) and primary health care centers (PHCs) by the year 2022 to provide an essential package of 12 services*¹. The principle behind providing these essential package of services is to bring “time to care” to not more than 30 minutes (NHSRC 2018) ¹. The use of digital tools in health services have an enormous potential for improving quality and delivery of primary healthcare. Available literature suggests, use of mhealth for improved knowledge and skills related to maternal and child health for Accredited Social Health Activists’ (ASHAs) in tribal areas of Gujarat (Shah et al.,2018)² and under the National Health Mission (NHM (Chib et al. 2012)³ ; telemedicine for healthcare delivery in underserved rural areas (Mathur et al., 2017)⁴ ; and smartphone usage for improved coordination, confidence and performance levels among the front-line workers and impact on beneficiary health behavior in Saharsa, Bihar (Borkum et.al., 2015)⁵. mHealth interventions have also enhanced uptake of iron and folic acid supplementation and self-reporting of pregnancy and delivery related complications in Uttar Pradesh (Prinja et al. 2017)⁶. In July, 2018, NITI Aayog proposed a visionary digital framework, “National Health Stack” aiming to create digital health records for citizens of India by the year 2022 (NITI Aayog 2018b)⁷. In line with this, an Information Technology (IT) System interoperable at the national and state level is also envisioned at the HWCs (NHSRC 2018)¹.

* Care in Pregnancy and Child-birth, Neonatal and Infant Health Care Services, Childhood and Adolescent Health Care Services, Family Planning, Contraceptive Services and other Reproductive Health Care Services, Management of Communicable Diseases: National Health Programs, General Out-patient Care for Acute Simple Illnesses and Minor Ailments, Screening, Prevention, Control and Management of Non-communicable Diseases, Care for Common Ophthalmic and ENT Problems, Basic Oral Health Care, Elderly and Palliative Health Care Services, Emergency Medical Services including Burns and Trauma & Screening and Basic Management of Mental Health Ailments

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that there is no potential conflict of interest concerning the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.